



# COMMUNITIES RESPONDING TO DISASTERS: **PLANNING FOR SPONTANEOUS VOLUNTEERS**



# The Panel

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Project Manager

# Communities Responding to Disasters: Planning for Spontaneous Volunteers



# Australian Disaster Resilience Handbook Collection

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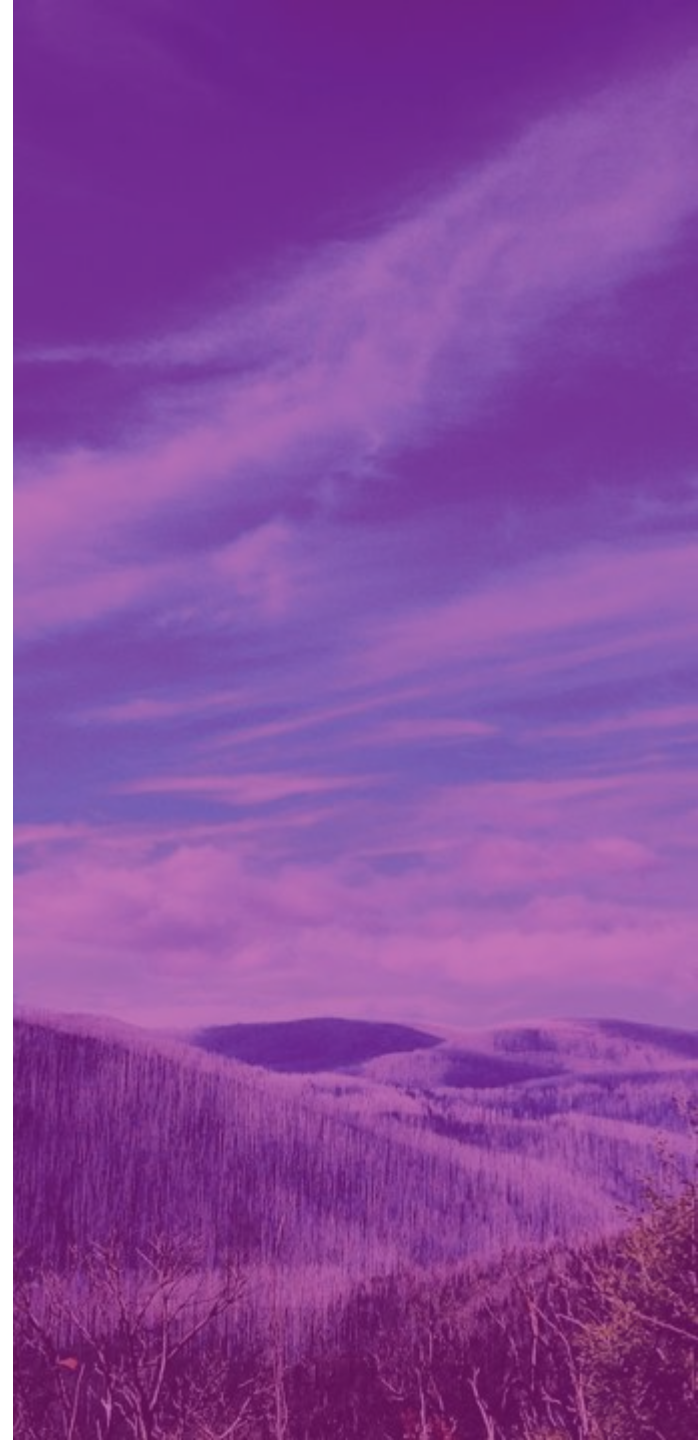
[knowledge.aidr.org.au/handbooks](http://knowledge.aidr.org.au/handbooks)



Australian Institute for  
Disaster Resilience

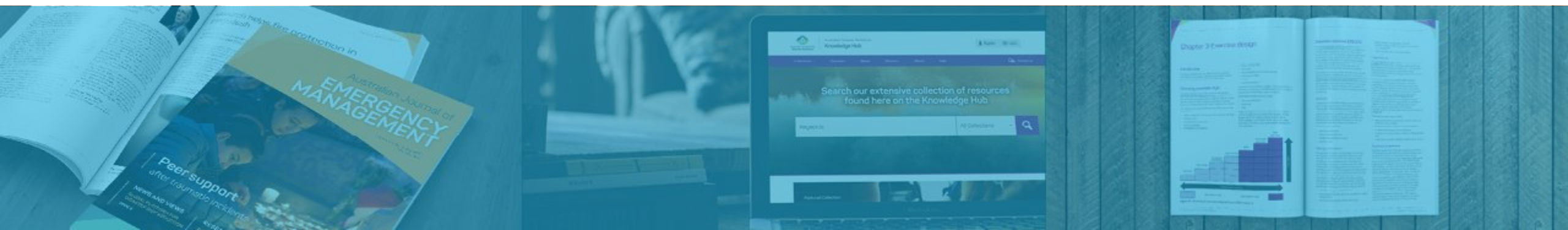
# Key principles

- Place community at the centre
- Consider all possibilities
- Plan early and proportionately to need and risk
- Engage early, develop partnerships and relationships
- Communicate clearly using common language
- Ensure role clarity and shared responsibility
- Ensure situational awareness
- Encourage safe behavior and self care
- Continuously learn and improve



“ The single largest reason that people give for spontaneously volunteering following a disaster is 'a compelling need to help.'”  
(Case Study 23)

“ Irrespective of any formal policy position or strategy, previous history and contemporary experience clearly demonstrate that community members will spontaneously volunteer in the aftermath of disaster. Policies and processes will be needed, whether or not jurisdictions and emergency management agencies decide to engage spontaneous volunteers in the post disaster phase.”  
(National Spontaneous Volunteer Strategy)





## What's in the Handbook?

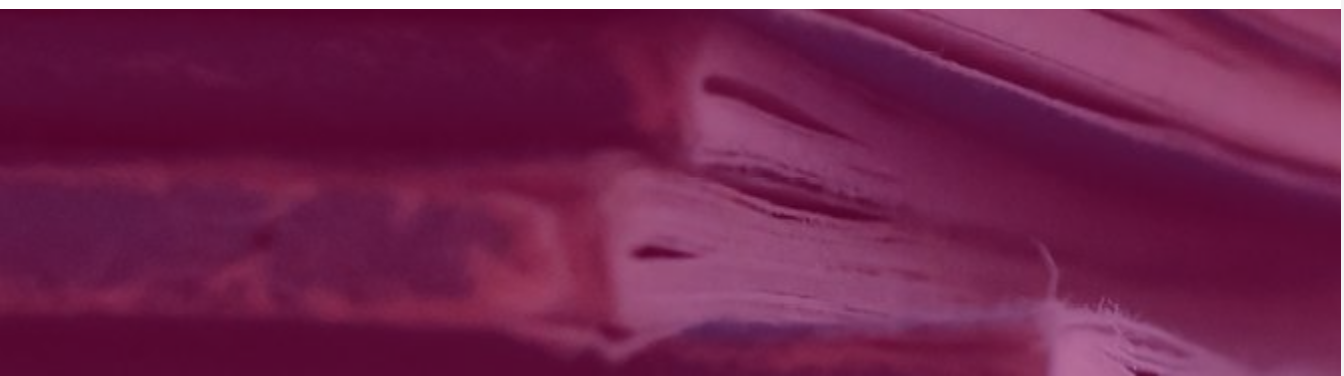
- Part 1 Introduction
- Part 2 Policies and principles that support spontaneous volunteering
- Part 3 Strategies for supporting and coordinating spontaneous volunteers
  - Making decisions about spontaneous volunteers
  - Questions to guide decision making
  - Strategic engagement before, during and after emergencies
  - Preparing to work with spontaneous volunteers
  - Psychosocial considerations
  - Longer-term recovery
  - Monitoring and evaluation
- Case studies
- Further reading

# National Spontaneous Volunteer Strategy

- coordination
- empowerment and disaster resilience
- positive experiences

## Goal: Coordination of volunteer effort in the immediate post disaster stage

Principles	Summary of suggested actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>① People affected are the first priority.</li><li>② Spontaneous volunteering aids recovery and resilience.</li><li>③ Jurisdictions will take considered policy positions about engaging spontaneous volunteers.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consider the management of spontaneous volunteers in recovery plans and budgets.</li><li>• Identify suitable post disaster activities in advance.</li><li>• Involve existing community groups in pre-event recovery planning and exercising.</li><li>• Review existing legislation that addresses risk and liability for spontaneous volunteers.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>④ Processes will need to engage volunteers and support agencies.</li><li>⑤ Standard volunteer management processes apply in emergencies.</li><li>⑥ Spontaneous volunteering is included in existing recovery arrangements.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop scalable processes that reflect the motivations of spontaneous volunteers.</li><li>• Provide information about how the needs of people affected by the disaster are being met.</li><li>• Register spontaneous volunteers and monitor their safety and wellbeing.</li><li>• Integrate arrangements for spontaneous volunteers into existing emergency management plans.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>⑦ Everyone has a right to help and be valued.</li><li>⑧ The time when help is offered may not coincide with the need for volunteers.</li><li>⑨ Effective, timely and consistent communication is essential.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recognise the inevitable nature of spontaneous volunteering.</li><li>• Provide training and guidelines for individuals and emergent groups who may spontaneously volunteer.</li><li>• Promote future volunteering opportunities and ensure effective follow-up and referral.</li><li>• Develop communication plans and key messages including the use of social media in recovery.</li></ul>



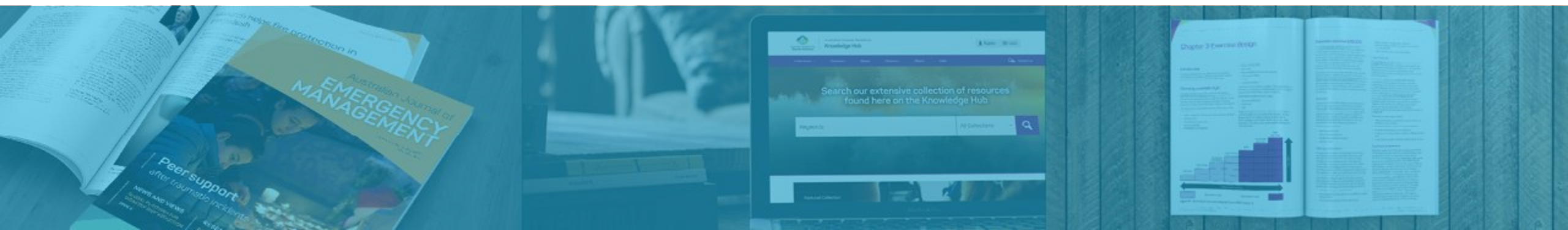
Everyone should be doing at least these 2



# Five Levels of Strategy for Engagement of Spontaneous Volunteers



**There are risks and benefits of engaging spontaneous volunteers**  
**There are risks and benefits of not engaging spontaneous volunteers**





# Questions to Guide Decision Making

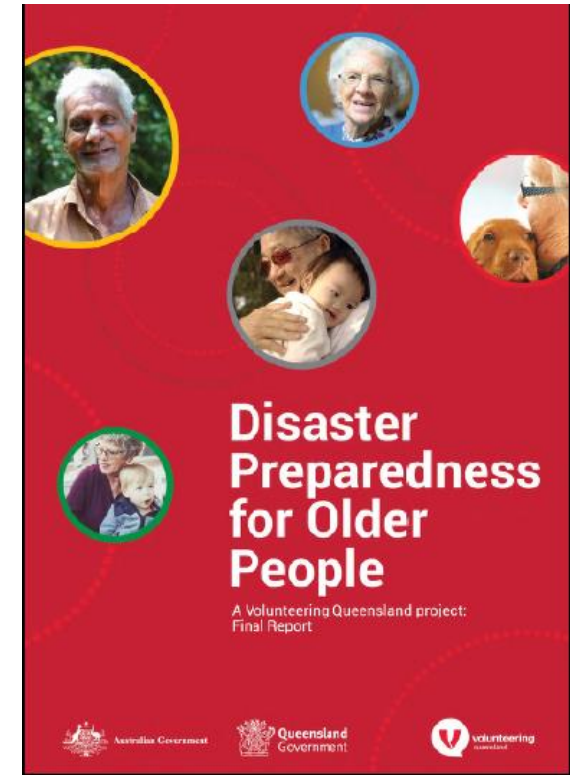
- What arrangements for coordinating spontaneous volunteers exist at the state or jurisdictional, regional and local level, and what is our role within them?
- What primary goals and motivations would we have in deciding to engage spontaneous volunteers?
- What are the potential benefits to the community, the volunteers and our organisation?
- What are the potential risks to the community, the volunteers and our organisation?
- What are the potential consequences if we don't support or coordinate spontaneous volunteers?
- Is it right for this scenario?
- Is it right for this community?
- Is it right for these spontaneous volunteers?
- Is it right for my organisation or group?

# Procedural vs Enabling Orientations

Broadly speaking, strategies for supporting and coordinating spontaneous volunteers, can be more procedural or more enabling (problem solving) in their orientation. Figure 2 outlines key differences between procedural and enabling orientations.

Procedural	Enabling
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assumption: Problems are most effectively solved through command-and-control structures, emergencies reduce the capacity of existing social structures.</li><li>• Priorities: ensuring safety and maintaining control; informing; bringing spontaneous volunteers into traditional management structures.</li><li>• Plans: detailed and lengthy; focus on prescriptive procedures for all anticipated circumstances and desired behaviour; rigid.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assumption: Problems are most effectively solved through existing social structures; command-and-control structures are not effective for mobilising community capacity.</li><li>• Priorities: supporting decentralised decision making and improvisation; liaising; adapting management structures to integrate spontaneous volunteers. Agile outcome focused.</li><li>• Plans: guidelines not prescriptions; focus on communication, relationships, and need preparation, training; adaptive.</li></ul>

# Natural disaster resilience projects

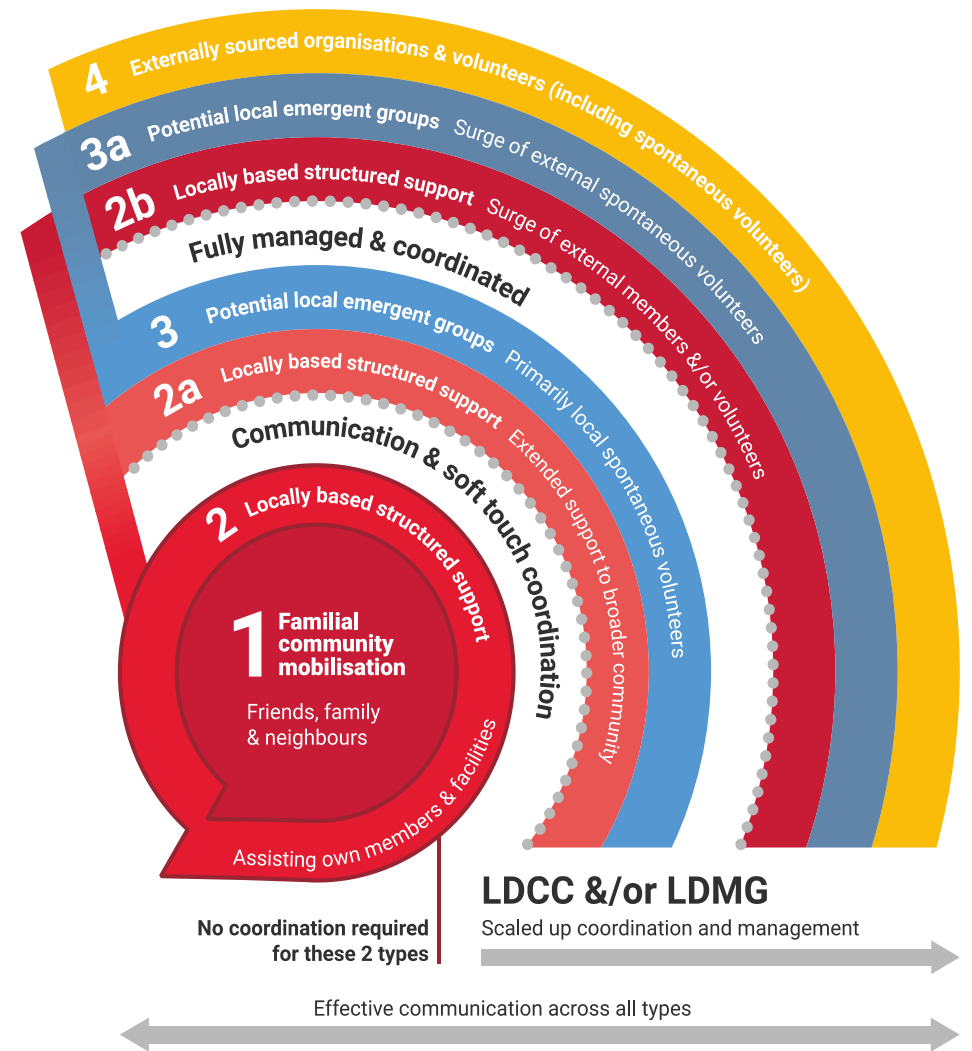


# Building community capability to manage spontaneous disaster volunteers project

- **Looked** at the considerations, challenges and opportunities of working with spontaneous disaster volunteers
- **Identified** models for the management of spontaneous disaster volunteers
- **Mapped** organisations with interest and capacity to manage spontaneous disaster volunteers
- **Developed** specialised training for team leaders of spontaneous disaster volunteers

Volunteering Qld Reflections

# Mobilisation approaches for voluntary assistance in disaster response and recovery



Volunteering Qld Reflections

# Models

## **Utilise local groups**

From engagement with councils, all expressed a strong commitment to utilise local groups in the first instance as far as possible - in keeping with Qld Resilience Strategy

## **Models included management of spontaneous disaster volunteers by**

- Council staff / volunteers
- One primary group
- A consortium of groups
- Community Champions – unique, place-based model

# Volunteering Qld Reflections

- As models evolved, it appeared a locally based model for small to medium scale disasters - coupled with larger groups as a 'pull in' for extra resources as required, emerged as a preferred option
- Models involving groups with 'usual' business roles closely aligned to their disaster roles appeared more likely to be sustainable and have existing connections to communities and councils, e.g. VIP and CVA
- Some models were more resource intensive than others to maintain and implement
- Models that utilised a range of partners could potentially cover a broader scope of work, access more resources / tools and be more cost effective

Volunteering Qld Reflections

# Disaster preparedness for older people recommendations

- Increase
- Include
- Share
- Assess



Volunteering Qld Reflections



# Communities responding to disasters: planning for spontaneous volunteers

Put the handbook into practice – professional development clinics running throughout 2018

This handbook draws on and complements current and ongoing activity in spontaneous volunteer management, and builds on the capability and knowledge of organisations and individuals across the disaster resilience sector in Australia and internationally.

The handbook builds directly upon the national Spontaneous Volunteer Strategy endorsed by the Australia-New Zealand Emergency Management Committee on 2 October 2015; the handbook supports the strategy by providing general guidance to organisations on ways to incorporate its principles into their plans and activities.

The handbook also facilitates linkages between the Spontaneous Volunteer Strategy and the Spontaneous Volunteer Management Resource Kit, developed in 2010 by the Australian Red Cross for the former Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA).

## Professional development clinic: Planning for Spontaneous Volunteers

This clinic will provide guidance on applying the principles to plan for spontaneous volunteers in disasters as outlined in the Communities Responding to Disasters: Planning for Spontaneous Volunteers Handbook.

### Upcoming locations

May - [Darwin](#)

June - [Hobart](#)

July - [Cairns](#) / [Brisbane](#)

September - [Perth](#)

## Communities Responding to Disasters: Planning for Spontaneous Volunteers Handbook

(Handbook 12, PDF 1.14MB)

Current

Published 2017 (AIDR)

[Download](#)

## Related Resources

[Handbook 2 Community Recovery](#)

[Handbook 3 Managing Exercises](#)

[Handbook 9 Australian Emergency Management Arrangements](#)

[AJEM Oct 2017 - New handbooks for the Handbook Collection](#)

[National Strategy for Disaster Resilience](#)

Australian Disaster Resilience Handbook Collection

HANDBOOK 12

# Communities Responding to Disasters: Planning for Spontaneous Volunteers



# What now?



Companion documents



Professional development



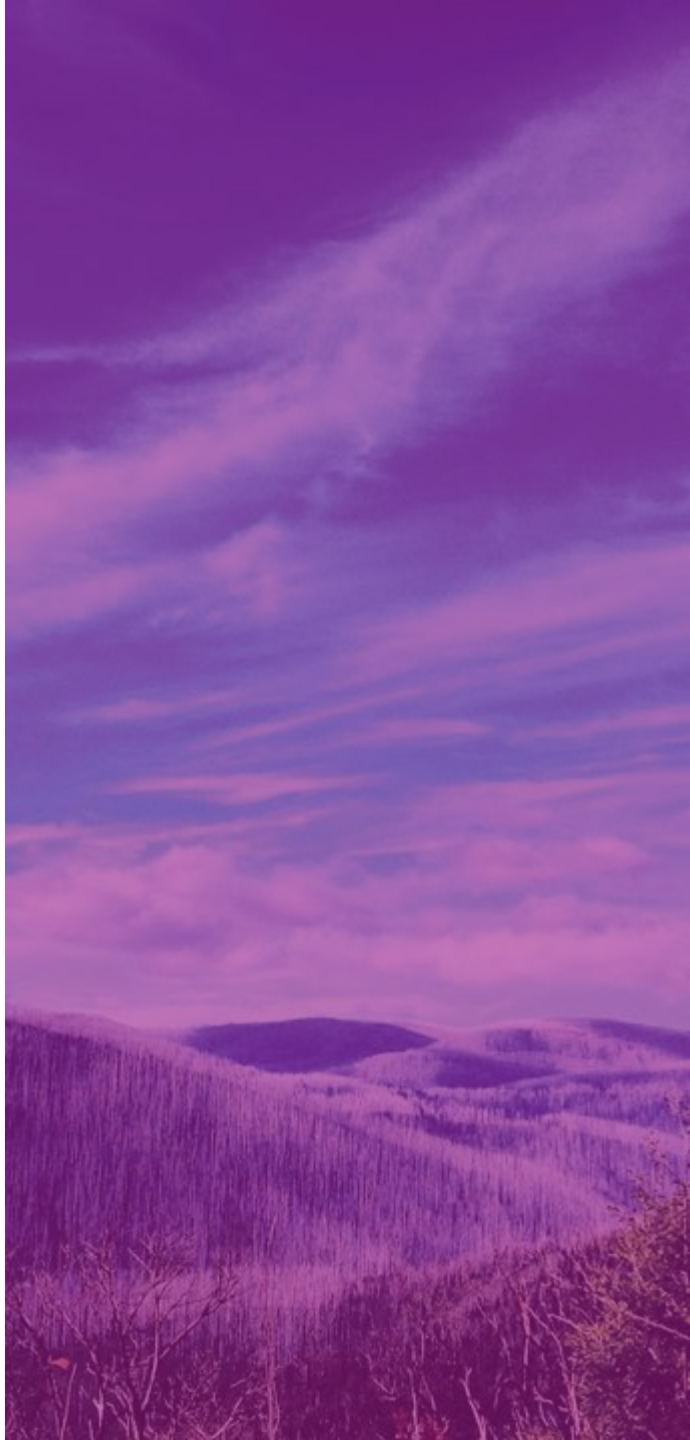
Australian Journal of Emergency Management



Knowledge Hub



Communications



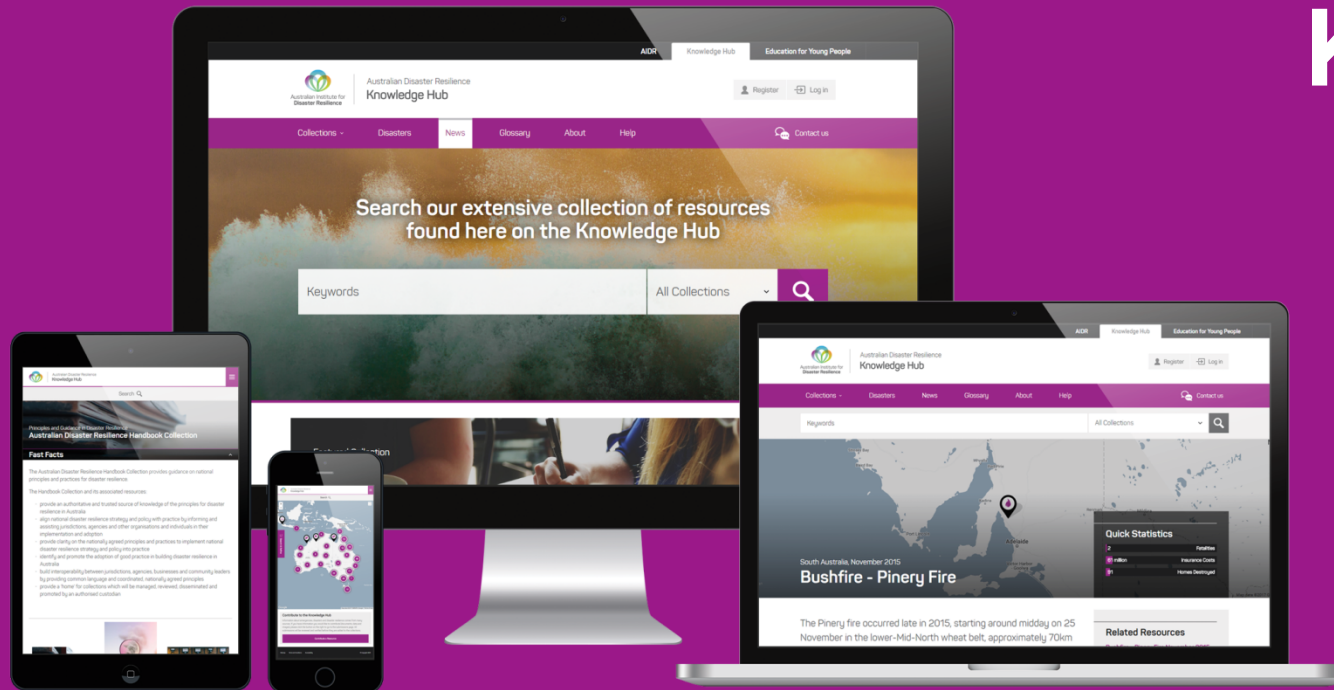
{NO ONE}  
can do

everything

but  
{EVERYONE}  
can do

something  
- unknown

# Disaster Resilience Knowledge Hub



[www.knowledge.aidr.org.au](http://www.knowledge.aidr.org.au)

# Explore national resources for disaster resilience

Keywords

All Collections ▾



The Knowledge Hub is a national, open-source platform that supports and informs policy, planning, decision making and contemporary good practice in disaster resilience.

Information on current emergencies and disasters is available from the emergency response agencies in your state or territory

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### Handbook Collection



The authoritative source of national principles and practices for disaster resilience

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### Australian Journal of Emergency Management



Australia's premier journal for in emergency management covering all hazards and all emergencies.

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### Education & professional development resources



Courses and events across Australia to challenge assumptions and build knowledge and practice in emergency management at all career stages

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### Emergency Management Library



One of the largest emergency management libraries in the southern hemisphere

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### Centre of Excellence for Prescribed Burning



Best practice and research to inform prescribed burning planning and implementation

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### Recovery



Resources, information and publications focused on recovery in Australia and internationally

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### Volunteering



National volunteer stories, resources and professional development opportunities

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### Australian disasters



A historical record of disaster events that have affected Australia



Image: Glenn Daniels, 2016

# Volunteering

People in Australia have a long history of volunteering to help communities in preparing for, responding to and recovering from disasters. Some volunteers are spontaneous – they see a need and put up their hand to help. For others, volunteering is a proud tradition or a long-term commitment to a local emergency service or community group.

This collection highlights a range of key national resources for investing in volunteers, showcasing volunteer stories and opportunities for training and development.

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Planning for Spontaneous  
Volunteers Handbook



National principles for supporting and coordinating spontaneous volunteers

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Volunteering in AJEM



News and Views and research related to volunteering

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Stories and opportunities



Development opportunities for volunteers and insights from past participants

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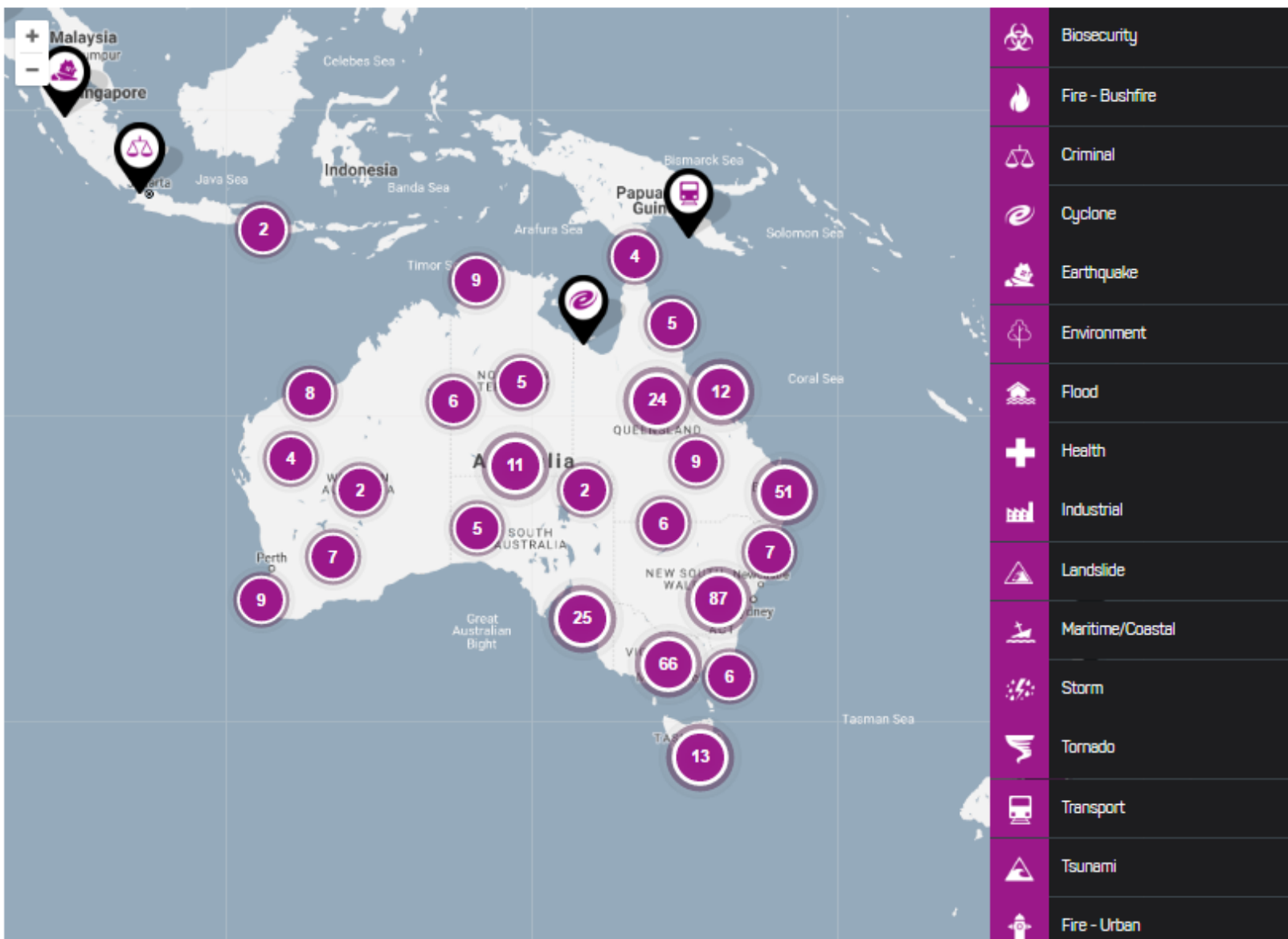
Further resources



Information to support volunteering in an Australian context

# Disaster Map

Launch Full Map





# Current publications

Australian emergency management arrangements



Communicating with people with a disability



Communities responding to disasters: planning for spontaneous volunteers



National Strategy for Disaster Resilience: Community Engagement Framework



Community recovery



Disaster health



Evacuation planning



Incident management



Lessons management



Managing exercises



Managing the floodplain



National Emergency Risk Assessment Guidelines (NERAG)



Public information and warnings



Safe and healthy crowded places



Tsunami emergency planning



# Communities responding to disasters: planning for spontaneous volunteers

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Australian Disaster Resilience Handbook Collection

HANDBOOK 12

# Communities Responding to Disasters: Planning for Spontaneous Volunteers



  
Australian Institute for  
Disaster Resilience



## Education & professional development

The Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience Professional Development Program delivers courses and events across Australia to challenge assumptions and build knowledge and practice in emergency management at all career stages. The program benefits individuals across diverse sectors; from volunteers to management teams, and across governments, business, emergency management agencies and humanitarian organisations.

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### About the program



Learn more about courses and events delivered by AIDR

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### Events calendar



Browse and register for upcoming AIDR events

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### Engagement Matters



Explore proceedings from workshops on community engagement for disaster preparedness, response and recovery

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### Study disaster resilience



Browse study options in Australia

# Recovery

"the restoring or improving of livelihoods and health, as well as economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets, systems and activities, of a disaster-affected community or society, aligning with the principles of sustainable development and 'build back better', to avoid or reduce future disaster risk."

United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, 2017

Disaster recovery is a dynamic field – knowledge on effective recovery has changed significantly in the past two decades, and continues to develop through research and practice. This collection brings together resources, information and publications focused on recovery in Australia and internationally.

## Community Recovery Handbook



National principles for community recovery

## Recovery in AJEM



Recovery news and research from the Australian Journal of Emergency Management and the Monograph series

## Monitoring & Evaluation



A resource to support design, planning and evaluation of recovery programs

## Further resources



Further resources for recovery including the National Principles for Disaster Recovery, and proceedings from the National Recovery Workshop (2017)

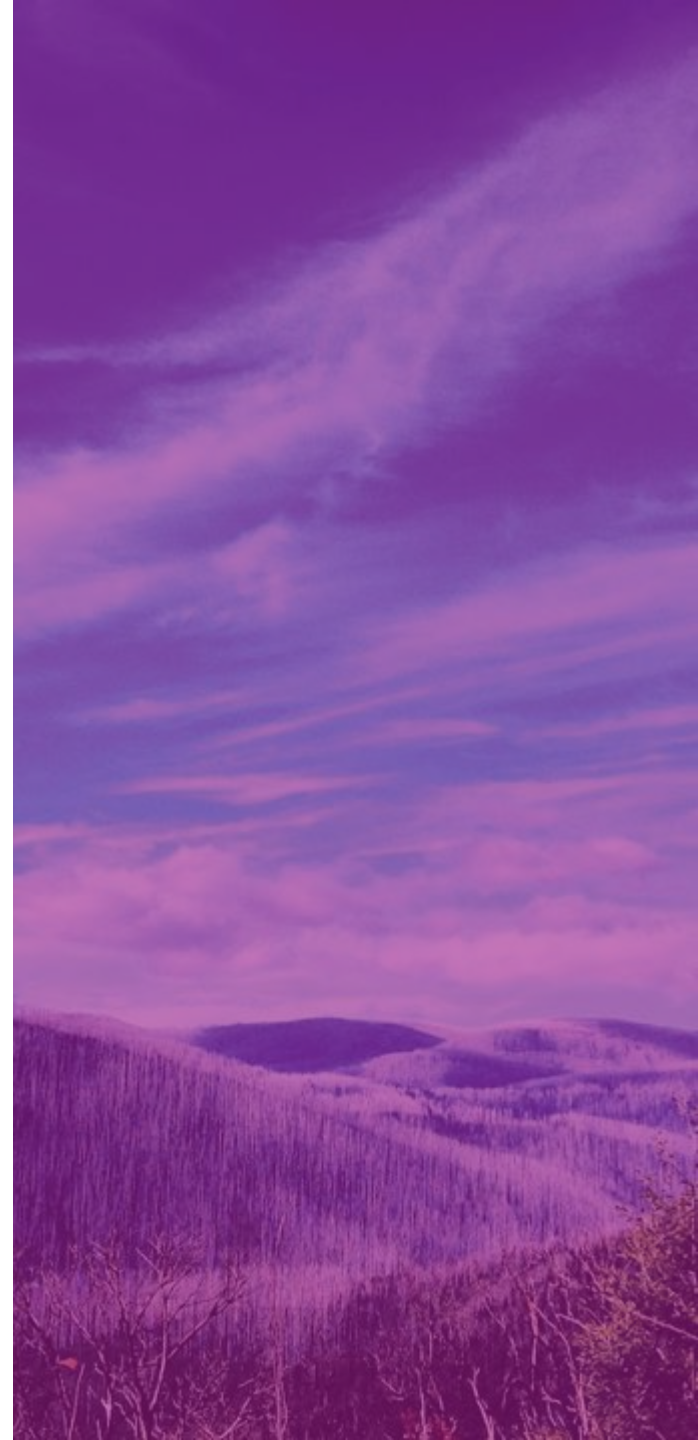
# AIDR is a disaster resilience knowledge centre

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AIDR develops, maintains and shares knowledge and learning to support a disaster-resilient Australia.

Building on extensive knowledge and experience in Australia and internationally, we work with government, communities, NGOs, not-for-profits, research organisations, education partners and the private sector to enhance disaster resilience through innovative thinking, professional development and knowledge sharing.

AIDR is supported by its founding partners: the Australian Government, AFAC, Australian Red Cross and the Bushfire & Natural Hazards CRC.





# Ways to get involved

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- Handbook Collection
- Australian Journal of Emergency Management
- Education for Young People
- Volunteer Leadership Program
- Professional Development Program
- Emergency Management Volunteer Scholarships
- Centre of Excellence for Prescribed Burning
- Resilient Australia Awards
- Australian Disaster Resilience Conference



# Volunteer Leadership Program

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[www.aidr.org.au/programs/volunteer-leadership-program/](http://www.aidr.org.au/programs/volunteer-leadership-program/)



# Resilient Australia Awards

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[aidr.org.au/programs/resilient-australia-awards/](http://aidr.org.au/programs/resilient-australia-awards/)





A photograph of a person with long blonde hair, wearing a blue shirt, sitting at a table and writing in a spiral notebook. The table also has a white mug on a saucer, a laptop, and other papers. The background is blurred, showing other people at a conference. The entire image has a reddish-pink color overlay.

# Australian Disaster Resilience Conference 2018

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[aidr.org.au/programs/australian-disaster-resilience-conference/](http://aidr.org.au/programs/australian-disaster-resilience-conference/)



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Disaster Resilience

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